

The field engineer as well as the transit man took an interest in him and the work he was doing. And they placed him with many questions regarding his views on the local species and their development.

The conversation started in earnest when the chief asked him what school he was from, and the boy replied. "I am from the school of life."

"I don't know that I get your meaning," observed the chief.

"It is sometimes called the school of hard knocks," Jack explained.

"Do you mean to tell me that you have never been to high school or college; that you have mastered that vocabulary all by yourself?" the chief almost exclaimed. Then turning to the transit man who had been brewing the java over a sage brush fire, he said, "What do you think of this? Here is a kid who says he has never been to school and who unconsciously uses the vocabulary of a college man."

"It is quite true that I never went to an organized school, yet I have not allowed my mentality to atrophy. I have managed to take a few grades

in the school of life for it contains every department of knowledge. Permit me to illustrate skeletons by the wayside lecture to me on comparative anatomy. That is the sub-division of it commonly known as osteology. It gives me a good deal of pleasure to be able to tell from a chance bone to which species it belongs. In the same way one can study orthology, entomology, sociology and economics. I study by direct observation and then check up my conclusions in books, and again I read books and check up by direct observation. Of course I am handicapped by the fact that I do not possess microscopes, test tubes and other necessary laboratory apparatus. But I'll get them some day. For the present I can only say, it's hell to be poor."

So it happened that after the lunch was over the chief tried to persuade him to join the party and go with them across the Sierra Nevada to the head of Owens river, California. "We'll give you a job as back flagman. Then you can carry your books with you and read all you please."

"Yes, and be the mule for the whole party," Jack interrupted, which made the whole crew laugh. For while it is true that the back flagman has an easy job as far as actual surveying is concerned it also falls to his lot to carry the lunch, and all accessory equipment for the party from one station to another. He had noticed the particularly heavy load with which the rear flagman came forward from his station back on the line at lunch time.

Still the chief's offer interested him greatly, and he told him that while he could not accept definitely, that in all probability he would be ready to join the party in a week. This was entirely agreeable to his prospective employer. As the anticipated vacancy in the party would not occur for several days.

That afternoon the boy rambled down the gullies and over the plains, taking a series of pictures and making notes, as was his habit so that it was nearly sundown before he returned to his cabin, where a genuine surprise awaited him.

(Concluded next week.)

Palmer and the Cost of Living

From the Knot Hole

Reading Mr. Palmer's anti-profiteering stuff leaves us with a deep sense of humility. Prior to perusing it we had been inclined to agree with certain rude, coarse persons like Mr. McAdoo who think the campaign a joke. However, after examining 31 pages of Mr. Palmer's advice, we are convinced that the Attorney-General is a profound economist and the unthinking rabble will yet see the strength of his position.

Like most profound plans it is extremely simple. The campaign for cheaper cuts of meats is illustrative of the whole theory. Rightly understood, the cheapened meat campaign is a flanking movement—that is, it is intended to attack the cow from the rear. Our understanding of the theory is roughly as follows: Certain cuts of meat are expensive. Others are more so. Let us therefore eat only the expensive ones and let the more so ones alone till they come down. Or, to illustrate the idea graphically, let us divide the cow into two halves. The Attorney-General would have us eat of, say, the hind end of the cow exclusively until the other end gets cheaper. Then, having feasted upon the rearmost zone until the front end became cheap as dirt, his idea would be to shift the attack brilliantly

and rapidly to the anterior section and there focus consumption until the nethermost cuts are similarly reduced. This scheme would thus leave the entire cow as cheap as dogmeat. It is plain that the flesh of any quadruped capable of such bisection can be cheapened by like means. Nay, more; what is to prevent wearing the front or rear end of a suit of clothes exclusively until the laws of supply and demand operate beneficently. Maybe that would be going too far, for it might be asking too much to require a staid attorney-general to sit on a government-operated, cane-seated chair with a pair of seatless trousers. However, we cite the latter example only to indicate the possibilities.

Of course the guileless public are not required to attack the problem blindly. Mr. Palmer's 31 pages are packed with good counsel. He advises one, for instance, not to speculate, not to open numberless charge accounts and not to "let worry go hand in hand with unpaid bills." On this latter point we agree with Mr. Palmer, but our printer thinks we ought to worry a little more. He has done most of it so far.

There are some features of the program that are somewhat delphic. Just

what is meant by the advice to buy few well-chosen serviceable garments? Is Mitchell going to advise us to go around in B. V. D.'s this summer? If so, we appreciate his further advice not to "let things rip". Mr. Palmer's advice to purchasers of clothing is also enlightening. We quote: "Hold the cloth firmly in both hands and pull diagonally back and forth. If the threads separate the cloth is apt to prove unsatisfactory." If we may paraphrase this language and make it specific we should say something like the following: In purchasing a pair of trousers first put them on. Then have a friend grasp them firmly by the seat and pull. If the seat comes away in the friend's grasp, that particular pair would be unsatisfactory, and Mr. Palmer would not recommend them for evening wear.

The best piece of advice in the entire layout, however, is the sage observation that "if means are taken to prevent perspiration stains the waist will last much longer." We have decided to take that advice, get a job in the Department of Justice and quit sweating.